



**Rep.
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7th District

Legislative Report

Spring 2003

Dear friends and neighbors,

State lawmakers have a long and challenging agenda to work through during the 2003 legislative session – with significant issues that will affect you and your family. We believe the success of the 2003 session will be measured by two important criteria:

- 1) Did we make progress in protecting and attracting more jobs** for Washington's families? and
- 2) Did we solve problems in a manner that will help restore the people's trust** in government?

Repairing our struggling economy, balancing the state budget without new taxes, making sure families have access to affordable health care, and maintaining quality in our schools will all be important steps toward our goals of putting people to work and rebuilding trust.

Of course, as we work through these issues, it's important that we hear your concerns and ideas. Please take the time to complete and return the enclosed survey. We look forward to hearing back from you.

It's an honor to be working on your behalf in Olympia.

Sincerely,

Cathy McMorris

Bob Sump

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please complete the survey on back and return by mail to: Rep. McMorris, P.O. Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600. Or you can reply via e-mail to mcmorris_ca@leg.wa.gov or sump_ro@leg.wa.gov

Representative **Cathy McMorris**

Creating jobs for Washington families

Most of us realize that Washington's budget situation is a serious concern, but we believe the real crisis facing our state is the condition of our economy and its effect on families. Here in the 7th District, we've had more than our share of layoffs, with the loss of jobs at Northwest Alloys, Battle Mountain Gold, Echo Bay and soon the Vaagen Brothers mill. That's why bringing jobs and prosperity to Washington families is our number-one priority for the next two years.

Unfortunately, our state has suffered the loss of 160,000 jobs over the last three years. A recent survey showed that the top concerns facing employers are taxes and government regulations. We believe there needs to be a shift in the philosophy of government so that it begins to act as a partner, not an adversary, with our state's employers. Government should encourage economic progress to help stimulate job growth. In communities, such as ours, that depend heavily on our land base and natural resources, it's important that we fight for the rights of property owners in order to protect their livelihoods.

We hope to adopt reforms that will stimulate the economy and create 160,000 new private sector jobs in the next three years.



Rep. McMorris was elected by her colleagues to the position of House Republican Leader. She is the first woman to be elected to the top leadership post in the House of Representatives. Her new responsibilities include setting legislative priorities and working toward the adoption of bills supported by the caucus. Her new role also gives the 7th District a strong voice at the table when important decisions are made.

Let's make choice, access and affordability our priorities for health care

It's clear that we can do better providing health care for all citizens. Health care costs are going up. Employers and employees are paying more out of pocket. And it is becoming increasingly more difficult to find a doctor or health care provider in our local communities.

We recently lost a prominent surgeon from Newport and hospitals, like so many others in our district, are struggling to provide services and keep their doors open. Small communities, such as ours are hit especially hard when doctors and clinics close their doors. People shouldn't have to drive 50 miles or more to get health care.

We are supporting legislation that focuses on consumer-driven health care and making sure patients have more choices and access to affordable care.

One of the leading factors driving up health care costs is the skyrocketing cost of medical malpractice insurance in Washington. Frivolous lawsuits and large legal settlements have made insurance unaffordable for even the best physicians. The results are predictable. Washington has seen a 31 percent increase in the number of health care providers moving out of our state. Others have no choice but to close their practices.

We support legislation that proposes medical malpractice insurance reforms. We can protect consumers and provide relief for doctors in our communities so they can continue caring for us and keep our health care affordable.

Natural Resources: A common-sense approach

We believe in a balanced approach to natural resource management. The people of Washington deserve our best effort to protect the taxpayers and ensure our children and grandchildren have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.

We support a reasonable approach. Many of us have spent decades on this land. It is our legacy to our children. We are willing to work with the state to develop a common-sense environmental protection policy.

In the past few years, we have come a long way in our conversations with lawmakers from around the state to balance the needs of the 'two Washingtons.' Although we still have concerns the current water-related proposals address mostly the needs of municipal water suppliers, they represent an improvement over proposals offered up in the past. We have introduced bills addressing the needs of agriculture and others seem willing to work with us on developing solutions.

Shorelines rules amended

Just last year, Dept. of Ecology attempted to rewrite the shoreline management law without input from elected legislators. Citizens came together to fight these new rules on how we manage our shorelines. This resulted in an agreement to make positive changes to these regulations, to address the concerns of agriculture and other landowners.

While the end result was an improvement, we are urging state agencies to take a more cooperative approach to address the concerns of citizens when drafting new regulations. We are also supporting legislation to bring more accountability to the rulemaking process, to ensure the citizens have a voice at the table when rules are proposed by unelected bureaucrats.



Bob Sump serves this year as the Ranking Republican on the House Fisheries, Ecology and Parks Committee and on the budget-writing House Appropriations Committee.

Road maintenance requirements a burden to landowners

The Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, required under 1999's Forest and Fish Report, is unreasonable and could force many to perform expensive repairs. We have heard countless stories of the financial and emotional turmoil to landowners from impending RMAP compliance and we are working to change those requirements.

We support a bill to mitigate the costs to our local small forest landowners.

House Bill 1095 would:

- ◆ alter the road maintenance and abandonment plan requirements for small forest landowners,
- ◆ establish a cost-share program to provide financial assistance to small forest landowners for the removal of fish blockages,
- ◆ The definition of forestland EXCLUDES: Primary residential home sites, up to 2.5 acres; and all lands used primarily for agricultural purposes regardless of size, including pastures, orchards, grazing lands, and areas necessary for the preparation, production or sale of agricultural products.
- ◆ Small forest landowners are DEFINED as those who own 20-acre blocks of forestland or less, but no more than 80 acres.



The Forest and Fish Report, and its RMAP component, was designed to restore and maintain riparian habitat to protect fish, meet Clean Water Act standards, and keep the timber industry economically viable.

It was written for major timber companies, not small forestland owners. Right now, what we can do is try to reduce the impact on your land and pocketbook.

We will keep our commitment to developing a common-sense solution that respects the environment as well as the rights of Washington landowners.

Budget remedy lies in spending discipline, improved economy

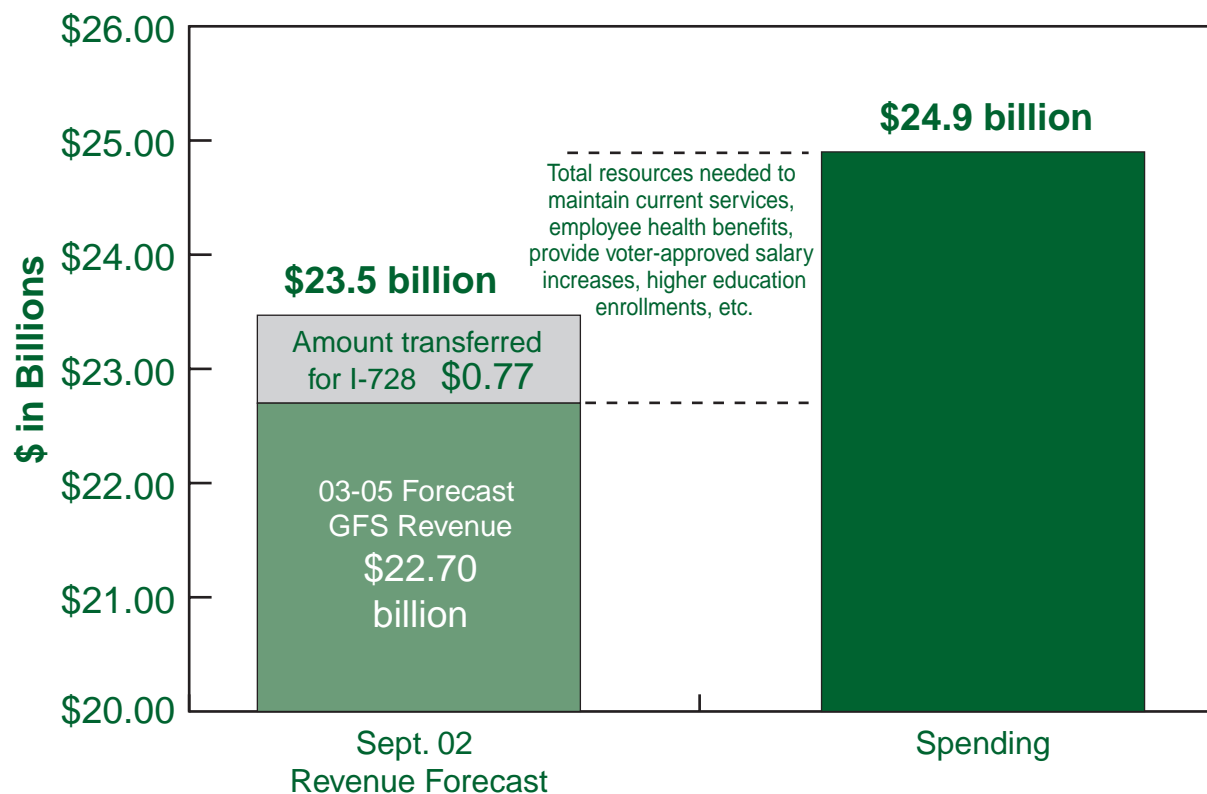
The state of our beleaguered operating budget – now facing a \$2 billion deficit – should come as a surprise to no one. It is the product of overspending in a declining economy – two factors that were largely ignored a year ago when a new spending plan was adopted.

The 2002 state operating budget authorized the expenditure of \$1.4 billion more than the amount of revenue the state had coming in. It was irresponsible and unsustainable, and now we're paying the price.

We want to be honest about this: The Legislature cannot close this enormous budget deficit without affecting some people who depend on government services. Government has grown too far beyond its means to solve this problem without some pain.

However, we believe it is both possible and imperative that the Legislature balance this budget without raising general-fund taxes. State government is facing challenges, but so are families and employers throughout our state. It's important that government share in the pain during these difficult times and start living within its means.

\$2.1 billion Shortfall in 2003-05 budget:



It's true that the state's costs for things such as health care and citizen-driven initiatives are rising faster than available revenue. But this would be the worst time to raise the tax burden on families and businesses. In the near term, we think government must tighten its belt and make some difficult decisions.



Please
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Rep. Bob Sump

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Legislative priorities

Rank these issues from 1 to 7 according to their importance to you, with 1 being most important:

_____ budget and taxes
_____ education
_____ growth management and land use
_____ health care and social services
_____ jobs and the economy
_____ transportation
_____ water
_____ other (specify:) _____

Comments: _____

Would you like more information?

If you would like periodic updates on issues that you've indicated are important to you, please provide information below.

Name _____
Address _____
_____ and/or
E-Mail _____

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